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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/021,302	12/19/2001	Toshio Sengoku	723-1224	9356

7590 12/04/2003
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EXAMINER
JONES, SCOTT E

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3713	

DATE MAILED: 12/04/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/021,302	SENGOKU, TOSHIO
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Scott E. Jones	3713

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) 7-21 is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-6 and 22 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 23 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 19 December 2001 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____ .
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 5 and 6 . 6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to because:

- In figure 2, next to the process flow arrow between blocks (10) and (20), “operation” is misspelled “oparation”. This informality is repeated in process flow block (S516) in figure 9.
- Paragraph [00103] describes how at step (S308), it’s determined whether or not received data buffer (FIFO buffer) (50) is empty. If empty, the process proceeds to step (S330). However, figure 12 shows the process proceeds to step (S328) rather than step (S330).

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

2. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it exceeds 150 words as required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.72(b). Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

3. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

4. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

- On page 11, paragraph [0033], line 5, the “,” after “program.” should be deleted.
- On page 20, paragraph [0071], line 4, the “,” after “machines.” should be deleted.

- On page 30, paragraph [00101], line 8, a space should be placed between “50” and “in”.
- On page 37, paragraph [00122], line 1, a space should be placed between “100 d” and “are”.

Correction is required.

Claim Objections

5. Claim 23 is objected to because of the following informalities:

- In claim 23, line 1, “last” should be changed to “least”.

Correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 1-6 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

8. In claim 1, the claim language, “an operation data storage that stores operation control status data...the operation control status data being used with game processing,” is unclear. As understood by the examiner, “valid” operation control status data is transferred to the operation data storage (buffer) (60) before the operation control status data can be used for game processing (as shown in figure 7c). However, the claim language then states, “wherein, when the operation control status data stored in the buffer storage as a result of a particular round of data communication include valid operation key status data and invalid data, and the invalid operation

control status data among the operation control status data resulting from a plurality of rounds of data communication including the particular round are not effectively transferred to the operation data storage, so that at least one such valid operation key status data is transferred for each of the plurality of game devices.” The examiner interprets the claim language, “invalid operation control status data among the operation control status data resulting from a plurality of rounds of data communication including the particular round are not effectively transferred to the operation data storage” to mean that at least one of the plurality (four) game devices has not generated “valid” operation control status data, and therefore, at least one “valid” operation key status data is not transferred to the operation data storage (buffer) (60) for game processing (as shown in figures 7 a or b). The examiner suggests the claim language be amended to include, “upon a subsequent round of data communication, a valid operation key status data is generated for the game device that generated an invalid operation key status data resulting from a plurality of previous rounds of communication so that at least one such valid operation key status data for each of the plurality of game devices is transferred to the operation data storage for game processing.”

Claims 2-6 inherit the deficiency of claim 1 by dependency.

9. In claim 22, the language, “loosely synchronized” is unclear. The examiner is not sure if applicant is referring to some type of software-based synchronization. Applicant should provide clarification in the next response.

Allowable Subject Matter

10. Claims 7-21 are allowed.

11. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Regarding independent claims 7, 8, 14, 15, and 21, the instant application is deemed to be directed to a nonobvious improvement over the invention patented in U.S. 5,396,225. The improvement comprises validating operation control status data for each game device, interconnected and playing the same game, prior to updating/transmitting the data to each game device.

Conclusion

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Okada et al. '225, '227, and '978 disclose an adapter used for a plurality of interconnected game devices to transmit data to/from each of the game devices.
- Fujimoto et al. '291, Ohashi et al. '476, Nagashima '157, Hirano et al. '292, and Newberry '443 disclose systems and methods for games in which two or more players can play.
- Kagan et al. '045, Takenouchi et al. '528, Norman et al. '305, Ng '855, and Sonoda et al. '068 disclose systems and methods for playing interactive multiplayer games over a local area network. Furthermore, each discloses having at least one game device serve as a parent game device and at least one other game device serving as a daughter game device.
- Comas et al. '583 and Bakoglu et al. '775 disclose interactive games played over a network.
- Addink '477 and Roy et al. '909 disclose systems and methods for reducing latency for multiplayer games played on interconnected computers.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott E. Jones whose telephone number is (703) 308-7133. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday--Thursday, 6:30 A.M.- 5:00 P.M.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Teresa Walberg can be reached on (703) 308-1327. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1148.

Scott E. Jones
Examiner
Art Unit 3713

sej

